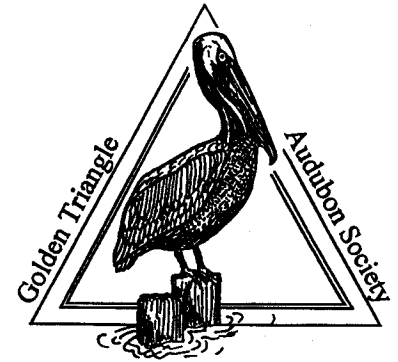


Brown Pelican

Scanned from Originals

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 6 No. 2

February 2000

Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 2000

6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

On the Road to Recovery -- A Program on Bluebirds

Charles Post

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

Charles Post is a charter member of the Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club, and served as its president for two years. He has a special interest in bluebirds and has maintained a Bluebird Trail since 1989, monitoring 50-60 boxes in and around Liberty. He also coordinates the monitoring of the bird club's 115 box trail. He is a member of the North American Bluebird Society and contributes to their nest monitoring program. Charles has a B.S. degree from Stephen F. Austin State University, and has worked for Sun Pipeline Company for the past 25 years.

As usual, the doors will be open no later than 6:30 p.m., and the proceedings will start at 7:15 p.m. approximately.

January Meeting Report

David Baker of the Big Thicket National Preserve was our speaker for the Golden Triangle Audubon membership meeting that was held on Thursday, January 20, 2000.

Today David thinks that the single most important thing that could be done to preserve birds is marketing. The Big Thicket was set aside for preservation management. According to David, there is a very powerful connection between marketing and preservation. If you can attach a financial value to a living resource it guarantees its survival. This is why marketing is important. The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail is one of the greatest preservation efforts of this state. It is attaching a tremendous financial value to migratory songbirds. Tourists that are attracted to this trail will generate lots and lots of money in Texas and some of that money will go to the counties and some will go to preservation. One of David's jobs is to get people to fall in love with the Big Thicket. Because what people love they will take care of.

He shared with us some of the marketing techniques used to educate people about the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. These marketing techniques include an exhibit, which is available to any one that would like to use it. Another marketing device was the

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The Brown Pelican

Vol. 6, No. 2 Feb. 2000

Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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Calendar of Events

If you can present a program of interest to a Membership Meeting, or know of some person who can, please contact Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193.

For more information on field trips, please contact Steve Mayes, (409) 722-5807 or the trip leader.

February 3 through 6 -- Lawn, Garden and Home Improvement Expo "House With A Heart".

If this issue reaches you in time, please volunteer to help set up and man our booth at this show to be held February 4 through 6 at the Beaumont Civil Center. Call Jeannie Lanclos at 409-724-1307 as soon as possible.

In addition to our booth, there will be other items of interest, including a series of educational topics presented by the Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association in cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

February 17 -- Membership Meeting.

See front page of this issue.

February 19 - Field Trip.

Nature Conservancy's Sandyland Sanctuary, looking for the wintering birds of Southeast Texas. Brown-headed Nuthatches are quite common in the area, and we should find woodpeckers and a few sparrows in the open areas. Meet at the Sanctuary parking lot at 7:30 a.m. After rains, the low lying parts of the sanctuary and the floodplain trail may be wet or even under water. Rubber boots recommended in those circumstances. The Sanctuary is on Highway 327, which runs from Highway 69/287 just south of Kountze over to Business Highway 96 in Silsbee. From the south, it is probably easiest to take Highway 69/287 and turn right (east) on Highway 327. The entrance to the parking lot is on the north side of the road, immediately after the highway dips down to cross Village Creek. (Most of the sanctuary is on a bluff on the east side of the creek.)

March 11 - Sabine Woods Work Day

Please come help us prepare the Woods for the birds in advance of spring migration. Meet at the Woods at 7:30 a.m. or later. Bring pruning shears, clippers and your other favorite brush

clearing tools. Increasingly, rotary lawnmowers are helpful. Also bring gloves and other protective gear, including mosquito repellent. Call John Whittle 409-722-4193 for further information.

March 11 - Big Thicket Loop of Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail -- Southeast Texas Migration Celebration

To celebrate the opening of the Upper Texas Coast section of the trail, the Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce associated with the Big Thicket Loop will be presenting a series of displays and programs at the new Texas Travel Information Center on Interstate 10 in Orange from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

March 16 -- Membership Meeting.

Unfortunately, P. D. Hulce will be unable to speak at the March meeting because of a conflict with an important duty at work. Watch next month's *Brown Pelican* for details of our March program.

March 18 -- Field Trip.

Following tradition, we will seek early migrating shorebirds at Bolivar Flats, meeting at the vehicle barrier at 8:30 a.m., or join the group out on the flats shortly after. The Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary is accessed from Highway 87 about three miles east of the Ferry landing on the Bolivar. Turn south from Highway 87 along Rettillon Road (opposite the eastern intersection of Loop 108 with Highway 87. If sand conditions permit, drive onto the beach, turn right (west), and drive approximately one half-mile to the vehicle barrier.

April 14-16 -- Twenty-first Annual Texas Wilderness Pow Wow.

This will be held at the Townsend Park Recreation Area in the Angelina National Forest near Broadus. Featured will be walks into the Turkey Hill Wilderness. For more information, contact the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, 1301 South IH-35, Suite 301, Austin, Texas 78741. Tel: (512) 441-1122; email tconr@mindspring.com.

April 20 -- Membership Meeting

Jace Stansbury will present a program on Chimney Swifts

(continued on page 7)

Bird Sightings - December 1999

Coverage: Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper, Newton, Angelina, San Augustine and Sabine counties. **Send Reports to:** John Whittle, 3015 Nashville Avenue, Nederland, Texas 77627-6749 by the 10th of the month after or e-mail to whittleja@hal.lamar.edu or call (409) 880-8276 or fax to (409) 880-8270. For "very rare" birds, please submit a brief account of your sighting, including a description of the bird (unless unmistakable), brief details of what it was doing, and where it was seen (if on publicly accessible property). **Format:** "Common" to "abundant" birds are shown in the fashion "JEF 4 reps(25)" which means four reports in Jefferson County totaling 25 birds. Less than "common", as "JEF-SW 7/5(2) ABC", which means seen in Jefferson County (JEF) at Sabine Woods (SW) on the 5th of July, two (2) birds, reported by observer "ABC".

Commentary: Despite the unusual conditions stemming from the drought affecting our region, December was a very normal month. Wintering hummingbirds were recorded throughout the month, and are presented in abbreviated fashion. Waterfowl are concentrated in a few areas, and were seen in good numbers on Robert Hurt's bird class field trip to the Keith Lake area of Murphree. Most Christmas Counts cover parts of more than one county, but results are rarely recorded by county. Some of the sightings on the two Big Thicket counts are included where we have county information. The Sandhill Cranes reported last month in large numbers were seen through the first half of the month, but were not reported subsequently. Sightings of Eurasian Collared-Doves are becoming more frequent, suggesting they have established themselves in the area.

GREBE, Pied-billed	HAI 1 rep(9); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 6 reps(215)	TEAL, Cinnamon	JEF-TP 12/23(1) SM
GREBE, Eared	JEF 2 reps(3)	SHOVELER, Northern	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(693)
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 5 reps(858); ORA 1 rep(1)	PINTAIL, Northern	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(1016)
PELICAN, Brown	JEF-TX87 12/5(3) JAW; JEF 12/11(5) PAFT; JEF-SRSP 12/24(18) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/24(6) JAW	TEAL, Green-winged	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(359)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 12/5(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/5(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 12/5(3) JAW; JEF 12/11(1) JAW; JEF 12/11(25) PAFT; JEF 12/24(20) JAW; JEF-TXPT 12/24(3) JAW	CANVASBACK	JAS 12/19(28) BCCB; JEF 12/11(200) PAFT; JEF-TP 12/12(1) JAW
CORMORANT, Double-cr.	JAS 1 rep(170); JEF 6 reps(125)	REDHEAD	JAS 12/19(1) BCCB
CORMORANT, Species	JEF 1 rep(15)	DUCK, Ring-necked	JAS 1 rep(30); JEF 4 reps(81)
HERON, Great Blue	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 10 reps(32); ORA 1 rep(3); TYL 1 rep(1)	SCAUP, Lesser	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(17)
EGRET, Great	HAI 1 rep(7); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 12 reps(103); TYL 2 reps(5)	SCOTER, Black	JEF-SRSP 12/24(1) JAW
EGRET, Snowy	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 7 reps(74)	MERGANSER, Hooded	JEF 12/11(3) PAFT
HERON, Little Blue	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1)	DUCK, Ruddy	JAS 1 rep(32); JEF 2 reps(26)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 3 reps(11)	OSPREY	JEF 12/20(1) JAW
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 4 reps(25)	KITE, White-tailed	JEF 4 reps(5); TYL 1 rep(1)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	JEF 3 reps(29)	HARRIER, Northern	JEF 10 reps(42)
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	JEF 12/8(30) KS; JEF 12/11(1) PAFT	HAWK, Sharp-shinned	JEF 5 reps(5); TYL 1 rep(2)
IBIS, White	HAI 12/18(4) TCCB; JAS 12/19(5) BCCB; JEF 12/5(7) JAW; JEF 12/5(10) KS; JEF 12/11(20) JAW; JEF 12/11(30) PAFT; JEF-TP 12/12(39) JAW; JEF 12/18(100) SM; JEF-TP 12/23(35) SM; JEF-TP 12/26(20) JJW	HAWK, Cooper's	JEF-SW 12/11(1) JAW
IBIS, White-faced	JEF-TP 12/23(30) SM; JEF-TP 12/26(8) JJW	ACCIPITER species	JEF 12/5(1) KS; JEF-SW 12/5(1) KS; JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-TP 12/23(1) SM
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF 12/5(306) JAW; JEF 12/11(3) JAW; JEF 12/11(3) PAFT; JEF-TP 12/12(3) JAW; JEF 12/18(15) SM; JEF-TP 12/26(1500) JJW	HAWK, Red-shouldered	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(5); ORA 1 rep(3)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	JEF 12/5(15) JAW; JEF 12/11(15) PAFT	HAWK, Red-tailed	JEF 18 reps(95); ORA 1 rep(1)
VULTURE, Black	JAS 1 rep(30); JEF 5 reps(139); TYL 1 rep(12)	HAWK, Red-tail (Kriders)	JEF 12/11(1) PAFT
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 1 rep(23); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 11 reps(33); ORA 1 rep(6); TYL 2 reps(26)	CARACARA, Crested	JEF-SW 12/5(2) KS
GOOSE, White-fronted	JEF 4 reps(1497)	KESTREL, American	JEF 13 reps(101)
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 6 reps(16806); ORA 1 rep(35)	MERLIN	JEF 12/18(1) SM; JEF-SW 12/24(1) JAW
GOOSE, Ross's	JEF 12/5(18) JAW; JEF 12/11(1) JAW; JEF 12/11(1) PAFT; JEF-SW 12/24(2) JAW	FALCON, Peregrine	JEF 12/11(1) PAFT
GOOSE, Canada	JEF 2 reps(35)	BOBWHITE, Northern	JEF 1 rep(10)
DUCK, Wood	JEF-TP 12/12(1) JAW	MOORHEN, Common	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(2)
GADWALL	JAS 1 rep(30); JEF 4 reps(1160)	COOT, American	HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 1 rep(608); JEF 5 reps(3111)
WIGEON, American	JAS 1 rep(40); JEF 1 rep(2000)	CRANE, Sandhill	JEF 12/5(630) JAW; JEF 12/11(850) JAW; ORA 12/26(52) KS
MALLARD	HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 6 reps(259)	PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 2 reps(5)
DUCK, Mottled	JEF 12/11(4) PAFT; JEF-TP 12/12(6) JAW	PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 12/24(8) JAW
TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 4 reps(311)	PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF 1 rep(4)
		PLOVER, Piping	JEF-SRSP 12/24(4) JAW
		KILLDEER	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(122); TYL 1 rep(3)
		STILT, Black-necked	JEF 3 reps(21)
		AVOCET, American	JEF 1 rep(39)
		YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 5 reps(22)
		YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF 4 reps(22)
		WILLET	JEF 2 reps(66)
		CURLEW, Long-billed	JEF 3 reps(61)
		SANDERLING	JEF 1 rep(27)
		SANDPIPER, Western	JEF 2 reps(55)

SANDPIPER, Peep JEF 1 rep(15)
SANDPIPER, Least JEF 4 reps(81)
DUNLIN JEF 3 reps(183)
DOWITCHER, Short-billed JEF-TXPT 12/5(25) JAW; JEF
12/11(50) PAFT
DOWITCHER, Long-billed JEF 2 reps(210)
SNIPE, Common JEF 4 reps(8)
WOODCOCK, American JEF-SW 12/5(1) KS; JEF-SW 12/12(3)
KS
GULL, Laughing JEF 5 reps(62)
GULL, Bonaparte's JEF 1 rep(6)
GULL, Ring-billed JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(259)
GULL, Herring JEF 3 reps(6)
TERN, Caspian JEF 2 reps(2)
TERN, Royal JEF 1 rep(20)
TERN, Common JEF-SRSP 12/24(1) JAW
TERN, Forster's JAS 1 rep(18); JEF 3 reps(54)
TERN, Black JEF 12/11(1) PAFT
SKIMMER, Black JEF 1 rep(25)
DOVE, Rock JEF 3 reps(38)
COLLARED-DOVE, Euras. JEF 12/18(1) SM; JEF-TX87 12/24(2)
JAW
DOVE, Mourning HAI 1 rep(15); JEF 8 reps(93); TYL 2
reps(2)
DOVE, Inca JEF 1 rep(2)
GROUND-DOVE, Com. JEF-TP 12/23(2) SM
OWL, Barn JEF-SW 12/19(2) SM
SCREECH-OWL, Eastern JEF-TP 12/26(1) JJW
OWL, Great Horned JEF-SW 12/5(1) JAW; JEF-SW 12/19(1)
SM
OWL, Barred JEF-TP 12/26(1) JJW
HUMM'BIRD, Buff-bellied JEF-SW 12/5(1) KS
HUMM'BIRD, Black-chinned JEF-NEDR 12/1 through 26+ (1) JJW
HUMM'BIRD, *Archilochus* JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-SW 12/24(1)
JAW
HUMM'BIRD, Rufous JEF-NEDR 12/1 through 26+(1) JJW;
JEF-BMT 12/1 through 31(RAJ)
KINGFISHER, Belted JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 4 reps(16)
WOODPECKER, Red-bell. JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(5); TYL 2
reps(22)
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell. JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 2 reps(2)
WOODPECKER, Downy JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 5 reps(11); TYL 2
reps(3)
FLICKER, Northern JAS 1 rep(2); TYL 2 reps(2)
WOODPECKER, Pileated JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1
rep(2); TYL 2 reps(3)
PHOEBE, Eastern JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 12 reps(59); ORA 1
rep(3); TYL 2 reps(2)
SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 18 reps(123); ORA 1 rep(2)
VIREO, Blue-headed JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(4)
JAY, Blue JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 6 reps(25); ORA 1
rep(2); TYL 1 rep(2)
CROW, American HAI 1 rep(13); JAS 1 rep(9); ORA 1
rep(2); TYL 2 reps(72)
CROW, Fish JEF-TP 12/23(1) SM; JEF-TP 12/26(50)
JJW
CROW, species JEF 1 rep(1)
LARK, Horned JEF-SRSP 12/24(1) JAW
SWALLOW, Tree JEF 12/5(2) KS; JEF 12/11(15) PAFT;
ORA 12/26(4) KS
CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 7
reps(10); ORA 1 rep(10); TYL 2 reps(20)
TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(10); ORA 1
rep(7); TYL 2 reps(31)
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted JEF-SW 12/5(1) JAW; JEF-SW 12/5(1)
KS; TYL 12/19(1) BCCB
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed TYL 12/18(1) TCCB
WREN, Carolina JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(4); ORA 1
rep(2); TYL 2 reps(13)

WREN, House JEF-SRSP 12/5(1) KS; JEF-TP 12/12(1)
JAW; JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-TP 12/23(1) SM; JEF-TP
12/26(1) JJW; ORA 12/26(2) KS
WREN, Winter JAS 12/19(1) BCCB; JEF-TP 12/26(1)
JJW
WREN, Marsh JEF-TP 12/23(15) SM
KINGLET, Golden-crowned JAS 12/19(5) BCCB; JEF-SW 12/5(2)
JAW; JEF-SW 12/5(2) KS; JEF-SW 12/12(2) KS; TYL 12/18(10)
TCCB; TYL 12/18(4) TCCB; TYL 12/19(20) BCCB
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 11
reps(36); ORA 1 rep(4); TYL 2 reps(19)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 8 reps(45); TYL 1
rep(1)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 1 rep(4); ORA 1
rep(8); TYL 2 reps(93)
THRUSH, Hermit JAS 12/19(3) BCCB; TYL 12/19(2)
BCCB
ROBIN, American HAI 12/18(12) TCCB; JAS 12/19(2)
BCCB; JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-SW 12/24(1) JAW; TYL
12/18(560) TCCB; TYL 12/19(202) BCCB
CATBIRD, Gray JEF-SRSP 12/5(2) KS; JEF-SW 12/5(1)
JAW; JEF-SW 12/5(4) KS; JEF-SW 12/11(1) JAW; JEF-SW
12/12(2) KS; JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-SW 12/24(1) JAW
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern JEF 11 reps(64); ORA 1 rep(6); TYL 2
reps(8)
THRASHER, Brown JEF 6 reps(22); ORA 1 rep(3)
STARLING, European HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 8 reps(393); TYL 1
rep(7)
PIPIP, American JEF 3 reps(31)
WAXWING, Cedar JEF 1 rep(15); TYL 1 rep(50)
WARBLER, Orange-crown. JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 9 reps(42); TYL 2
reps(2)
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(10); JEF 13
reps(106); ORA 1 rep(19); TYL 2 reps(20)
WARBLER, Pine JAS 1 rep(24); JEF 1 rep(3); TYL 2
reps(14)
WARBLER, Palm JEF-SRSP 12/5(2) KS; JEF-TP 12/23(6)
SM
YELLOWTHROAT, Com. JEF 3 reps(4)
TOWHEE, Eastern JEF-SW 12/5(1) KS; JEF-SW 12/19(1)
SM
SPARROW, Chipping HAI 1 rep(5); JAS 1 rep(5); ORA 1
rep(35); TYL 2 reps(90)
SPARROW, Field JEF-SRSP 12/12(1) KS; JEF-SW
12/19(1) SM; ORA 12/26(2) KS
SPARROW, Savannah JEF 7 reps(126)
SPARROW, Song JEF 5 reps(10); ORA 1 rep(4)
SPARROW, Swamp JEF 6 reps(20); ORA 1 rep(7)
SPARROW, White-throated JEF 8 reps(127); ORA 1 rep(9); TYL 2
reps(17)
SPARROW, White-crown. JAS 12/19(1) BCCB; JEF-SW 12/12(2)
KS; JEF-TP 12/12(25) JAW; JEF-SW 12/19(1) SM; JEF-TP
12/23(10) SM
JUNCO, Dark-eyed TYL 2 reps(5)
CARDINAL, Northern HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 10
reps(34); ORA 1 rep(4); TYL 2 reps(15)
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(180); ORA 1
rep(30)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern JEF 3 reps(51)
MEADOWLARK species JEF 3 reps(8)
BLACKBIRD, Brewer's JEF 12/5(200) JAW; JEF 12/11(25)
JAW
GRACKLE, Common JEF 3 reps(554); TYL 2 reps(208)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed JEF 3 reps(50)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed JEF 6 reps(836)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed JEF 4 reps(1114)
FINCH, House JAS 12/19(4) BCCB
GOLDFINCH, American JAS 1 rep(25); JEF 1 rep(2); TYL 2
reps(57)

SPARROW, House HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(45)

Number of Species 157
Number of Individuals 42705

County Abbreviations:

HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange; TYL - Tyler

Location Codes:

NEDR - Nederland; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods;

TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim; TXPT - Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations:

BCCB - Beech Creek CBC; JAW - John Whittle; JFW - Jana Whittle; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; KS - Ken Sztraky; PAFT - Lamar State College-Port Arthur Birding Class field trip to Keith lake area of Murphree WMA (Robert Hurt); RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan; SM - Steve Mayes; TCCB - Turkey Creek CBC.

Field Trip to Cattail Marsh - 22 January 2000

The lesson best learned from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's January field trip to Tyrrell Park's Cattail Marsh is that patience is a virtue in birding, as it is in most things.

About a dozen birders began the day in the marsh parking lot with White-crowned Sparrows, American Pipit and balmy weather. Anyone who has been on past winter trips to this spot probably recalls lots of ducks and a cold bus ride. This year, we had the ducks but the bus and the cold were noticeably absent. The trip was on foot, since the city of Beaumont is without the services of a weekend driver, so not all of the marsh could be covered but the assembled birders endeavored to hit the highlights.

The first cell had plenty of water and lots of American Coots. Ducks were also plentiful with large numbers of Gadwall, Northern Shoveler and Blue and Green-winged Teal easily seen. The first pass by the area where a male Cinnamon Teal had been seen in recent weeks did not reveal that bird, but the group pressed on. Killdeer and Eastern Phoebe were constant companions on the trip around the marsh and brief looks were had at Orange-crowned Warbler and a possible Palm Warbler. The first cell also produced numerous Black-necked Stilts and White-faced Ibis (alas, no Glossy).

Yellow-rumped Warblers were common and a Pine Warbler was heard calling from the park's interior. Two Northern Flickers perched atop a dead tree while Ring-billed Gulls soared overhead and Marsh Wrens chattered from the reeds, intent on being heard but not seen (or not seen well in any case). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were numerous but only one Ruby-crowned Kinglet was found. Other song birds encountered included American Goldfinch and groups of Tree Swallows and Fish Crows on the wing.

Waterfowl numbers were good but the distribution of species seemed different from past years. There were still plenty of Teal and Shovelers but very few Scaup. Mallard and Northern Pintail were in good supply but Ruddy Ducks were hard to come by. Ring-necked Ducks were seen well but only a single Bufflehead (in a group of Coots) could be picked out. Fair numbers of Snow Geese flew over but we also had two groups of Canada Geese to look at.

Raptors were not high in diversity but gave us good looks. Most common were Red-tailed Hawks, with typical Eastern birds seen along with paler individuals (possibly the Fuertes sub-species), and Northern Harriers with gray males and brown females and immatures seen. A couple of American Kestrels were noted.

Shorebird numbers were slim with a few Yellowlegs and Dowitchers being seen. Only a couple of White Pelicans were found (flying over), very different than the large numbers

formerly seen in the marsh. Cormorants were few but a female Anhinga was sighted. Wading birds were not particularly abundant.

As the group progressed around the levee roads, two trends were noticed. First, the longer we walked, the smaller the group got as tired legs won out over more birding. Second, the later it got, the more the wind picked up. By the time the group headed back for the entrance, we had been reduced to four birders and the howling wind made getting looks at ducks difficult and song birds all but impossible. But, as already stated, patience is a virtue, and all four birders were rewarded with scope filling views of a drake Cinnamon Teal, swimming among the Blue-wings in the very spot it wasn't in the morning (sorry Rose Ann)! At least two Ross's Geese (in flocks of Snows) were on hand to bid two of the birders farewell.

The final birders, eventually reduced to just Steve Mayes and John Haynes, made a last tour of the marsh and turned up a number of birds not seen by the rest of the group including Roseate Spoonbill, White-throated Sparrow, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Wigeon, and three more male Cinnamon Teal! Doubtless, there were females around as well but they are difficult to pick out from Blue-wings under ideal conditions much less on a windy day. It all, of course, proves that he who birds last birds best!

The following birds and numbers were noted by the trip leader with much help from the group:

Pied-billed Grebe(12), American White Pelican(2), Double-crested Cormorant(7), Anhinga(1), Great Blue Heron(4), Great Egret(35), Snowy Egret(9), White Ibis(5), White-faced Ibis(95), Roseate Spoonbill(1), Black Vulture(15), Turkey Vulture(7), Snow Goose(400), Ross's Goose(2), Canada Goose(51), Gadwall(550), American Wigeon(8), Mallard(32), Mottled Duck(10), Blue-winged Teal(300), Cinnamon Teal(4), Northern Shoveler(400), Northern Pintail(64), Green-winged Teal(275), Ring-necked Duck(20), Lesser Scaup(30), Bufflehead(1), Ruddy Duck(4), Northern Harrier(5), Red-shouldered Hawk(1), Red-tailed Hawk(5), American Kestrel(2), American Coot(1000), Killdeer(15), Black-necked Stilt(100), Greater Yellowlegs(3), Lesser Yellowlegs(3), Yellowlegs sp.(3), Dowitcher sp.(10), Laughing Gull(5), Ring-billed Gull(200), Mourning Dove(6), Red-bellied Woodpecker(2), Downy Woodpecker(1), Northern Flicker(2), Eastern Phoebe(10), Loggerhead Shrike(5), Blue Jay(3), Fish Crow(17), Tree Swallow(25), Carolina Chickadee(2), Carolina Wren(2), Marsh Wren(3), Ruby-crowned Kinglet(1), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher(10), Northern Mockingbird(1), European Starling(2), American Pipit(10), Orange-crowned Warbler(2), Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler(40), Pine Warbler(1), Palm Warbler(17), Common Yellowthroat(2), Savannah Sparrow(50), Swamp Sparrow(8), White-throated Sparrow(7), White-crowned Sparrow(30), Northern Cardinal(8), Red-winged Blackbird(200), Boat-tailed Grackle(2), Great-tailed Grackle(10), American Goldfinch(7).

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count - 2 January 2000

Very pleasant weather greeted observers as they assembled in Sabine Pass for the fifth Sea Rim State Park count in the resumed series. Twenty-nine observers in 13 parties recorded 35,049 birds of 153 species. This ties the record for number of species established in the December 1995 count. Five species were added to the species list for the resumed counts -- Rough-legged Hawk, American Oystercatcher, Solitary Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and dare we admit it, Rock Dove. Only the Oystercatcher and the Collared-Dove were totally new, the others having been seen in at least one of the five counts conducted in the seventies and eighties.

Conditions were very unusual, with extremely dry conditions caused by the lack of rainfall over many months apparently causing some shifts in the distribution of within the circle. The Lost Lake area of Murphree WMA held very high concentrations of waterfowl and wading birds. While the weather cooperated for land birding, a persistent sea fog, which never did lift, undoubtedly robbed us of two or three "pelagic" species, as a scouting trip the previous day produced, in a single scan of the Gulf at Sea Rim, an incredible 115 Gannets and all three scoter species.

No loons were seen this year, somewhat disturbing as last year's count produced only one. On the other hand, grebes were back. Over 600 Pied-billed Grebes were seen in a raft on Lost Lake, while both Eared and Horned Grebes were seen from Pleasure Island. Numbers of both White and Brown Pelicans were up substantially over totals of recent years. A single formation of 650 American White Pelicans was seen flying west low over the water at Sea Rim in the afternoon.

White Ibis numbers were about the same as the past few years, while White-faced Ibis, scarce this year elsewhere rebounded from lows in recent years. All time record numbers of Roseate Spoonbills were counted.

Both Black and Turkey Vultures continued to increase. Geese, on the other hand were scarce on count day, although other evidence suggests that this was an aberrant situation, as there are almost certainly record numbers of all four goose species in Jefferson County this year. Ducks were concentrated in Murphree, where there were 3500 Canvasbacks, with lesser but still large numbers of other species. The south impoundment of Pleasure Island had an estimated 5000 Green-winged Teal. However, scaup were in severely reduced numbers, as they were elsewhere on the Upper Texas Coast. Bufflehead and Ruddy Duck were in good numbers, many of the latter in the Gulf off Sea Rim. No Wood Ducks were seen, unusual but understandable as there is little of their preferred habitat, but the lack of even a single Red-breasted Merganser cannot be explained.

Hawk numbers were pretty much normal, although Cooper's Hawks outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawks two to one. Both the Murphree area and the Sabine-Texas Point area reported a good variety of species.

Although rails are not easy to see, nevertheless the numbers reported seem very low considering the large amount of suitable rail habitat in the count circle. Perhaps that is the

problem in that the rails have so much habitat to spread over and hide.

Shorebirds have always been a problem. There is little readily accessible shorebird habitat. We do find most of the expected species along the beach at Sea Rim, although the beach is generally narrow and lack areas of mud flats that would attract more birds and possible more species. When water levels are low, as they were on count day, there must be more shorebirds on the west side of the south impoundment at Pleasure Island, in the Keith, Johnson and Shell Lake areas, along the beach of the Texas Point NWR, and on the river bank on the Louisiana side of the Sabine-Neches Waterway. We need to make more effort to access these areas on future counts! There were very high numbers of Dunlins along the beach, and Woodcock were everywhere in Sabine Woods. At Sea Rim, the number of gulls and terns, not easily predictable was above average for most species.

A brighter note was struck by the doves, with Rock Doves along the waterfront on first street in Sabine, and 32 White-winged Doves and five Eurasian Collared-Doves, both in the vicinity of the Sabine Pass cemetery, where the only Inca Dove seen was also found. A good variety of owls was seen, but woodpeckers were disappointing with no Red-bellied Woodpecker found this year.

A hummingbird using the feeders at Sabine Woods was determined with reasonable certainty to be a Black-chinned. In winter, Black-chinned is generally more plentiful along the Gulf Coast than Ruby-throated.

The expected Passerine species were generally present, but not in outstanding numbers, and there were no surprises. Sparrows, however, were plentiful at Sabine Woods and elsewhere.

At the countdown dinner, held this year at Willy Ray's B-B-Q on Highway 69 in the north part of Port Arthur, the consensus was to hold the next count on Sunday December 31. Thanks are due to all who participated:

Jack Baugh, Dorothy G. Burroughs, Bob Collier, Glen Cook, Gerald Duhon, Don and Nancy Fisher, R. K. Goodridge, William Graber, John Haynes, Robert Hurt, Don and Patricia Jeane, Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan, Carol Lynn and George Loker, Steve Mayes, Dick Peake, Dwight Peake, Royce Pendergast, Sherrie Roden, Lu and Grady Skillern, Ken Sztraky, Joe Tibbs, LaRue Wells.

Count Results:

GREBE, Pied-billed (1081), GREBE, Horned (4), GREBE, Eared (9), PELICAN, American White (1036), PELICAN, Brown (128), CORMORANT, Neotropic (435), CORMORANT, Double-crested (307), CORMORANT species (9), ANHINGA (15), BITTERN, American (1), HERON, Great Blue (51), EGRET, Great (134), EGRET, Snowy (124), HERON, Little Blue (18), HERON, Tricolored (36), EGRET, Cattle (4), HERON, Green (1), NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (55), NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (6), IBIS, White (166), IBIS, White-faced (333), SPOONBILL, Roseate (335), VULTURE, Black (45), VULTURE, Turkey (29), GOOSE, Greater White-fronted (72), GOOSE, Snow (807), GOOSE, Snow (Blue) (15), GOOSE, Ross's (2), GOOSE, Canada (70), GADWALL (712), WIGEON, American (525), MALLARD (21), DUCK, Mottled (22), TEAL, Blue-winged (31), SHOVELER,

Northern (442), PINTAIL, Northern (181), TEAL, Green-winged (5727), CANVASBACK (3800), REDHEAD (12), DUCK, Ring-necked (700), SCAUP, Greater (4), SCAUP, Lesser (160), SCAUP, Species (300), SCOTER, Surf (2), SCOTER, species (8), BUFFLEHEAD (250), MERGANSER, Hooded (17), DUCK, Ruddy (376), DUCK, species (472), OSPREY (2), KITE, White-tailed (8), HARRIER, Northern (32), HAWK, Sharp-shinned (4), HAWK, Cooper's (8), HAWK, Red-shouldered (4), HAWK, Red-tailed (46), HAWK, Rough-legged (1), KESTREL, American (35), MERLIN (1), FALCON, Peregrine (2), BOBWHITE, Northern (1), RAIL, Clapper (1), RAIL, King (3), RAIL, Virginia (1), SORA (3), MOORHEN, Common (18), COOT, American (3500), PLOVER, Black-bellied (63), PLOVER, Snowy (7), PLOVER, Piping (6), KILLDEER (97), OYSTERCATCHER, American (3), STILT, Black-necked (17), AVOCET, American (216), YELLOWLEGS, Greater (1), YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (4), YELLOWLEGS, species (2), SANDPIPER, Solitary (1), WILLET (48), SANDPIPER, Spotted (8), CURLEW, Long-billed (2), SANDERLING (900), SANDPIPER, Western (25), SANDPIPER, Least (78), DUNLIN (1770), DOWITCHER, Short-billed (80), DOWITCHER, species (200), SNIPE, Common (4), WOODCOCK, American (6), GULL, Laughing (724), GULL, Bonaparte's (1500), GULL, Ring-billed (1225), GULL, Herring (77), TERN, Caspian (3), TERN, Royal (48), TERN, Common (1), TERN, Forster's (260), SKIMMER, Black (40), DOVE, Rock (5), COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (5), DOVE, White-winged (32), DOVE, Mourning (165), DOVE, Inca (1), OWL, Great Horned (2), OWL, Barn (5), OWL, Barred (1), OWL, Short-eared (1), HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chinned (1), KINGFISHER, Belted (22), SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (5), WOODPECKER, Downy (19), FLICKER, Northern (5), PHOEBE, Eastern (48), SHRIKE, Loggerhead (54), VIREO, White-eyed (1), VIREO, Blue-headed (2), JAY, Blue (46), CHICKADEE, Carolina (12), WREN, Carolina (1), WREN, House (8), WREN, Sedge (14), WREN, Marsh (13), KINGLET, Golden-crowned (10), KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (54), GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (45), BLUEBIRD, Eastern (1), THRUSH, Hermit (3), ROBIN, American (11), CATBIRD, Gray (11), MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (53), THRASHER, Brown (40), STARLING, European (161), PIPIT, American (9), WARBLER, Orange-crowned (66), WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (150), WARBLER, Pine (10), WARBLER, Palm (1), YELLOWTHROAT, Common (23), TOWHEE, Eastern (2), TOWHEE, Spotted (1), SPARROW, Chipping (1), SPARROW, Field (14), SPARROW, Savannah (96), SPARROW, LeConte's (2), SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-tailed (110), SPARROW, Seaside (18), SPARROW, Song (26), SPARROW, Lincoln's (16), SPARROW, Swamp (65), SPARROW, White-throated (73), SPARROW, White-crowned (12), CARDINAL, Northern (66), BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (1511), MEADOWLARK, Eastern (45), GRACKLE, Common (76), GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (733), GRACKLE, Great-tailed (189), GRACKLE, species (25), COWBIRD, Brown-headed (50), GOLDFINCH, American (35), SPARROW, House (91), SPECIES, total (153), INDIVIDUALS, total (34549),

within a certain city. To educate more people about birding a Beginning Birding Workshop is starting on February 12.

It was through the power point program that David took us on a journey around the Big Thicket Loop of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. There are 19 sites, at least 250 species of birds, and is a 350 mile round trip. Each site is marked with a brown sign illustrated with the familiar Black Skimmer logo, as well as a unique site number that corresponds with a beautiful and informative map. The trip starts at Site 1, which is at Tony Houseman State Park and Wildlife Management Area. Site 2 is Bon Wier. Site 3 is Wild Azalea Canyons. Site 4 is Toledo Bend Reservoir. Site 5 is Champion Canyon Rim Woodlands Trail. Site 6 is Sam Rayburn Reservoir. Site 7 is Angelina National Forest Boykin Springs Recreation Area. Site 8 is Angelina National Forest Upland Island Wilderness, Bouton Lake, and Sawmill Trail. Site 9 is Champion Woodland Trail. Site 10 is LPC Dogwood Trail. Site 11 is Jasper State Fish Hatchery. Site 12 is East B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir. Site 13 is Martin Dies State Park. Site 14 is West B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir. Site 15 is Big Thicket National Preserve. Site 16 is Gore Store Road and Turkey Creek. Site 17 is The Nature Conservancy of Texas Roy E. Larson Sandyland Sanctuary. Site 18 is Village Creek State Park. Site 19 is Tyrrell Park and Cattail Marsh, which many of us love to bird time and time again. David talked about each site in the program.

The trail is an ecotourism project. This trail will have an impact not only on our economy but also on our values. Not only the way we see ourselves but the way we see the world. Then he told us a powerful story (if you were not at the meeting I'm sorry you missed it). I think David's story was trying to demonstrate how easy it is for us to destroy nature but it is difficult or even impossible for us to repair what we destroy; therefore, we should learn to respect our ecology and learn to love and preserve our ecology.

Thank you David for making our January membership meeting a great one. It was enlightening to learn about the marketing techniques used to generate interest in the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. As David suggested, you will need 4 or more days to journey around the Big Thicket Loop, but it only takes about three hours to attend a membership meeting. Our next meeting will be Thursday, February 17, 2000.

January Meeting *(continued from page 1)*

development of a slide show. Then a power point program was developed. Media coverage with the local TV stations is another marketing device used. A video was made. Coming up on March 11 at Tony Houseman State Park and Wildlife Management Area there will be a Southeast Texas Migration Celebration, which will celebrate the first spring migration since the Upper Texas Coast Section was opened.

To orient the service providers to the trail, a handout was developed for the people that met the needs of the trail users. Hospitality training programs have been developed to train people in certain industries how to work with the general public and met their needs. Developing a packet of information obtained through the Chamber of Commerce that would cover all areas of the trail not just a particular area

Calendar of Events *(continued from page 2)*

April 22 - Field Trip

Bird Walk at Sea Rim State Park and Sabine Woods. Meet at the headquarters area of Sea Rim State Park at 7:30 a.m. The plan will be to bird the Willow Pond area of Sea Rim first, and then those interested may accompany us to Sabine Woods for more birding.

May 13 - North American Migration Count - Jefferson County. Contact John Whittle 409-722-4193 for details.

May 18 -- Membership Meeting.

Details in later issues of the *Brown Pelican*.

NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Form

To join the National Audubon Society, please complete this form and return with Introductory Membership fee of \$20 (payable to the National Audubon Society, or indicate you wish to be billed) to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, TX 77627-1292. To use this form to give a membership as a gift, please complete the form and indicate your name in the appropriate space. Payment should accompany gift memberships.

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To subscribe to the Brown Pelican, please complete this form or include the information on or with your check. Mail to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292 or bring to any Membership Meeting. Subscriptions from National Audubon members with mailing addresses outside our official territory, and others wishing to subscribe are \$15 per year. Members with addresses within our official territory are asked to contribute \$15 also if they are able.

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RARE BIRD ALERTS

Below is a listing of Rare Bird Alert telephone numbers for nearby areas. Transcriptions of current tapes are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.petersononline.com/birds/hotline/birdcptr.htm>.

Detailed information (maps and text) on birding sites on the Upper Texas Coast is also available on the Web at <http://texasbirding.simplenet.com>.

This includes all the Jefferson County hotspots published in early issues.

Golden Triangle	(409) 768-1340
Texas (Houston)	(713) 369-9673
Abilene	(915) 691-8981
Austin	(512) 926-8751
Ft. Worth (N. Cent)	(817) 329-1930
Lubbock	(806) 797-6690
N. E. Texas	(903) 839-4804
Rio Grande Valley	(210) 969-2731
San Antonio	(210) 308-6788
Waco	(254) 299-8170
Louisiana	(504) 768-9874

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